

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

What Is Whooping Cough?

- Whooping cough or pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory disease caused by a bacteria that attaches to the linings of the lungs.
- Pertussis is most dangerous for babies and young children. It can cause serious illness that can lead to hospitalization and even death.

How is it spread?

- Pertussis is a very contagious disease.
- When an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, whooping cough germs are put into the air.
- Anyone close by can breathe in the germs and may get sick.
- Many babies who get pertussis are infected by older siblings, parents, or caregivers who might not even know they have the disease.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms of pertussis usually develop within 5 to 10 days after you are exposed.

Early Symptoms

Early symptoms appears to be nothing more than a common cold and can last for 1 to 2 weeks and usually include:

- Runny nose
- Low-grade fever
- Mild cough
- Apnea – a pause in breathing (in babies)

Later-stage Symptoms

Lasts from 1-6 weeks; may extend to 10 weeks.

- Fits of many, rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched “whoop” sound
- Vomiting during or after coughing fits
- Exhaustion after coughing



Treatment

Early treatment with an antibiotic can:

- Make your infection less serious
- Help prevent spreading the disease to close contacts

How can pertussis be prevented?

The best way to prevent pertussis among babies, teens, and adults is to get vaccinated.

- Children need five doses of DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis) vaccine which begins at 2 months old.
- Teenagers should get the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine at age 11 or 12 years.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that pregnant women receive the whooping cough vaccine (Tdap vaccine) during the third trimester of **each** pregnancy.
- Overtime, protection from the shots fade. Adults should receive a tetanus and diphtheria booster (Td) every 10 years.
- Be sure anyone who spends time with your baby is up to date on their shots.
- Keep your baby from anyone with a cough or cold symptoms.

Protect yourself and your family from **whooping cough...**

Get vaccinated!

For more information: contact your health care provider;
visit <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/causes-transmission.html>;
or call the Guam DPHSS Immunization Program at 735-7143

